

#175 EDWARD VON GLAN: VETERINARY HOSPITAL, SCHOFIELD

Chris Conybeare (CC): This is an oral history interview with Edward Von Glan. It's December 4 . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

CC: This is an oral history interview with Edward Von Glan. It's December 4, 1986. We're at the Sheraton Waikiki in Honolulu. It's approximately eleven AM. Mr. Von Glan lives in Mesa, Arizona. My name is Chris Conybeare and I'm being assisted in the interview by Mark Tanaka-Sanders.

--: Chris, put your mike on.

CC: Oh, why don't I put my mike on? Could you hear me anyway?

--: Oh, yeah.

CC: For slate purposes?

--: Yeah, if you could just start again.

CC: Okay, we're going to start this the way we've done all of 'em so far. Could you state your name and rank on December 7, 1941?

Edward Von Glan (EVG): Lieutenant Edward H. Von Glan and veterinary station hospital, Schofield Barracks.

CC: That's a little interesting all by itself. What were veterinarians doing at that time?

EVG: Well, we were, our main job was food inspection, but we had 500 head of horses and mules at Schofield Barracks. The mules were with a pack train. A lot of the horses were private mounts that were taken care of by the Army. If they met up to Army specifications, why, the Army would then take care of 'em and they could use them for privilege riding, polo, and that sort of thing like that.

CC: And they used the mules for work?

EVG: They were all fitted with packs. This particular pack train could carry supplies for troops and also supplies, like hay and grain, for the animals themselves.

CC: Do you remember what you were doing and what was going on when the attack first started?

EVG: Well, I was supposed to be officer of the day on this Sunday morning, and I would report for duty at eight o'clock, but I was preparing to have breakfast and prepare to go into work, and I heard this terrible explosions and shooting, and I run out of the house. We were living in Wahiawa. I was married and we rented a house there. And one of the planes came over pretty low, and as it turned, I saw their red rising sun. I told my wife, "We're being attacked by Japanese bombers." And I said, "I have to go to work. Stay with the landlord

here," and I took off on my automobile and -- to the post -- and reported in as fast as I could.

CC: What did you do when you got there?

EVG: Well, I figured all these mules being in the stable, if we're going to be having any more bombs, they were pretty, well, pretty close together. A good idea would be to turn 'em all loose in the corral, and let them be separated, you know, and not cause as many casualties.

CC: Could you see what was happening elsewhere?

EVG: Yes, in the distance, I saw this smoke at Wheeler Field. I was the attending veterinarian there because we supplied them with food also. I understood that was the fuel dump at Wheeler Field. And then when I got to Schofield Barracks, we could look across the way and see what was going on at Pearl Harbor in the distance.

CC: What'd you see there?

EVG: Well, there was smoke and flames, and rising in the air.

CC: Was there any attempt to make use of your veterinarian skills as a physician? Did you get any of that kind of thing?

EVG: No, I didn't have any opportunity to do that. We didn't have any casualties right there at Schofield Barracks. We just ran into this strafing. As the bombs were dropped, why, if they had ammunition left, they strafed everything they saw that would move. And so we got strafed at Schofield Barracks.

CC: What did you feel when you realized people were shooting at you? How does that . . . how do you react to something like that?

EVG: Well, it's quite a shock. And you just sort of set your mind to try and do the next thing that is necessary to do. And sit and wait, and see what else can be done.

CC: So you don't engage in all that heavy philosophical thought? (Chuckles)

EVG: No. Self-preservation.

CC: What about after the attack? What kinds of things were you assigned to do, or did you start getting involved?

EVG: Well, then we --- I was supposed to stay right on base there at the hospital. And some of our detachment, they all seemed to be tired, and they were off in their quarters. And so it had to be one of these rainy nights, and I thought I'd try to get some rest. And a young fellow that joined the Army to keep out of reform school, he said, "I'm going to stick by you here. And just as soon as any action starts," he said, "I'll let you know."

And I said, "Okay," and I moved my old forty-five over to the side. That's the only weapon that was in the whole detachment. And so I tried to get a little rest and he watched, ended up, and stood guard.

But then, we did hear planes in the distance again. And jumped out and investigated, and circling slowly, and it looked like it was going to land at Wheeler Field, because, you know, we're right adjacent to the field. I don't know if they turned the landing lights on or anything like that, but he was, he looked like he was attempting to land, and it was determined it was a friendly plane. So we had this area covered with troops, perimeter, around the hospital there. And the verbal message was passed, "Hold your fire."

And they wanted them to be sure not to shoot at this particular plane. And they passed the word, "Hold your fire."

Somebody must have got trigger-happy, he let a round or two go, you know. And that set 'em off in a panic, and no one held their fire. And you could see the tracer bullets a-going from all directions, caught the plane in the crossfire. In a short time, I heard a crash and they shot the plane down. It was our own airplane off of the *ENTERPRISE*.

CC: Did you find out anything about was . . .

EVG: Oh, the pilot was killed and I never went to -- it happened quite a ways from us -- I never did investigate the crash.

CC: How about your wife? Did you get back in touch with her at all, or how did . . .

EVG: I told her to, "Now you stick with the landlord there and I'll have to report."

And so I heard later that she had got a garden hose and a couple other neighbors, and there had -- one Japanese plane had been shot down and started a fire, and they tried to keep the fire from spreading by turning on a garden hose. Now then, she was gone for ten days, two weeks, I can't remember. But they evacuated them, and they had to go past Pearl Harbor. And they were all on buses and they were evacuated into a schoolhouse.

CC: Was this that day or . . .

EVG: That same day. And then --- so I didn't know what happened. But they had to go by this Pearl Harbor road, where the heat was so intense that they had to scoot down in the bus, because the heat was coming through the windows. And then later, I discovered where she had been and to, came back to Wahiawa.

CC: When did you next talk to her? How long were you separated?

EVG: It must've been ten days, I would say.

CC: So you really didn't know what had happened?

EVG: Didn't know what happened to her. She was a nurse and it turned out she was helping other people when they got this big crowd at the schoolhouse.

CC: Was she a military nurse, or . . .

EVG: Yes, she had been a military nurse, but she resigned to get married. I don't know why they had her resign to get married. So she came over here as a civilian nurse and as soon as she came over, she got a job, and I came over much later. We were married in Hawaii.

CC: How long did these, this sort of trigger-happy condition last? What kinds of things were people saying and what was it like? Was it just the first night, or was it . . .

EVG: It was --- no, it continued for weeks. It was pretty scary. Everything was a blackout condition. And walking on the posts, you know, kind of touch and go. The guard would say, "Halt, who goes there?"

And I gave my name and rank, and well, the, "Come forward and be recognized."

And then afraid you're coming too close, you know, "Halt."

They wanted to see my I.D. I took it out and they says, "Just throw it on the ground and back up."

And he had a kind of a flashlight that sort of covered over. Tried to read it, you know. And there was that fear that you might be shot just trying to identify yourself because these guards were a little shaky themselves. And this continued for a long time.

CC: What were the, what were Okay, how much time do we have?

(Conversation off-mike.)

CC: Well, let's -- can we just wind it up in thirty seconds?

(Conversation off-mike.)

CC: Okay. Let's just -- we're going to do that. So you look back forty-five years, how do you feel about it, now? How do you feel about this whole experience?

EVG: It's something that I'll never forget. We wondered why did it happen. Who was responsible? We talked about this at our local chapters. I belong to the Brandon chapter in Phoenix. And we hope it never happens again.

CC: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW